

A DANGEROUS MIXTURE

July 21, 2015 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

The following article by the late M.H. Reynolds, Jr., first appeared in *Foundation* magazine, July-August 1982. Dr. Reynolds, a second generation fundamental Baptist, was a great help to me in understanding biblical separation in the 1980s. God uses men in our lives to teach us things, and I am thankful for the things I learned from Dr. Reynolds.

A Dangerous Mixture
By M.H. Reynolds, Jr.

Mixing truth and error is exceedingly dangerous, yet most people today seem very content with such a mixture, especially in the field of religious beliefs. The devil has made great headway in convincing the majority of people (including many Christians) that mixing truth and error is not only unavoidable, but can actually be beneficial. As a consequence, when God's faithful servants expose error and demand absolute separation between truth and error, they are often looked upon as unloving troublemakers.

The fact of the matter is that the Bible warns about the danger of allowing even a small amount of error to be mixed with truth. God says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). By contrast, the devil would have us believe that we are intolerant and bigoted if we insist on separating truth and error and putting accurate labels on each. The question is, "Will we believe God or Satan?" The choice should not be difficult! Satan is a liar, but God cannot lie!

It is difficult to understand how so many people see the value--yes, the necessity--of separating truth from error, good from bad, in almost every other realm of life, but refuse to recognize the need to apply this same principle in spiritual matters. In our country, stringent laws and careful inspections seek to protect consumers from eating food that has been contaminated in any way. No one objects to that. Many people learn from experience that you can't keep a rotten apple near a good one without losing both. Physicians and hospitals wage a continual battle to prevent infection which can spread like wildfire if not quickly identified and isolated. There are also strict laws requiring that all poisonous substances be clearly labeled as such and be kept entirely separate from medications to be taken internally. No one is heard claiming that such a principle is "extreme" or "unkind."

However, when it comes to spiritual issues and doctrinal matters, it is an entirely different story. Rather than treating doctrinal error as a dangerous poison, it is usually treated as a minor irritant. When a faithful pastor exposes the doctrinal heresies being promulgated by so many religious leaders and movements today, the common response is very apt to be along the following lines: "Well, I don't agree with a lot of things they do or say, but don't you think that they are also doing a lot of good?" When evidence is presented conclusively documenting the apostasy or false teaching of some denomination or other, a common response goes like this:

some of our leaders are saying some terrible things and that our denomination is not what it used to be, but the pastor of our local church is a fine man and he still preaches the truth."

In both of the above instances, the implication is very clear. Error is regrettable but not serious enough to do something definite about it. The inevitable result is that error thrives in such situations, protected in part by a very thin veneer of truth and supported by those who claim to love and believe the truth.

Contrast this kind of attitude with the recent tragedy involving Extra Strength Tylenol capsules. Seven people died after taking one of the capsules which had been "laced" with cyanide, a deadly poison. There wasn't very much poison in each capsule. Most of the ingredients were good. Yet, seven people died because they didn't know someone had mixed poison with Tylenol. How did the nation react to this situation? Immediately, warnings were issued across the country. Health authorities began making tests of Tylenol capsules, not only in the area where the seven deaths occurred but in every place where this product was being sold. Tylenol capsules were removed from all store shelves as a precautionary measure. Even though most of the capsules were subsequently found to be free from poison, no one was willing to take any chances that could cost another innocent person his life.

We consider it important to point out that during this entire episode, we did not hear anyone saying, "Don't be negative--don't worry about a little poison, just emphasize the good qualities of Tylenol." No one said, "Just be positive and remember how many millions of people have obtained relief from pain through using Tylenol over a period of many years." No, in this instance, everyone, including the manufacturer, took every step possible to make sure that no one else would be able to take a Tylenol capsule which had even a trace of poison in it!

Furthermore, consider the fact that no one considered the officials who sent out warnings across the nation to be "alarmists" or "extremists." No one accused the manufacturer or the health authorities of being "unloving" and "too judgmental" in their efforts to spare further loss of human life. Neither did anyone think that it was bigotry to express indignation that anyone would dare to mix poison with Tylenol or for that matter, with any medication available to the general public. The situation demanded extreme measures and extreme measures were taken. Every effort then and now will be to make sure that no one else will innocently die by taking a capsule which contains a mixture of good ingredients and poison!

Is it not then exceedingly sad to realize that so many people recognize the dangers of mixing good and bad ingredients together in those areas which affect human health and life while at the same time ignoring the same principle when it comes to the even more important issue of separating truth and error regarding spiritual matters? After all, Jesus said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Spiritual poison (doctrinal error) is far more serious than cyanide or any other deadly poison.. If we are willing to go to such lengths to enforce separation between poison and good medications, is there not an even greater responsibility to insist that there shall be no mixing of truth with error in doctrinal matters?

It is time to face facts! It is time to obey God's Word! Error is never more dangerous—more deceptive—than when it is mixed with truth. God's truth is never neutral, never passive, never silent. God's truth can never peacefully coexist with error. Instead, truth turns the spotlight on error and calls out with a loud voice of warning to separate from it. That is why we are especially concerned when we see evangelicals, charismatics, and even some fundamentalists treating major doctrinal errors as though they were simply “acceptable differences of opinion among believers.” Truth demands and produces separation from error. That is the plain teaching of God's Word (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Those who are willing to permit truth and error to be mixed together are simply not “walking in truth” themselves!

Distributed by Way of Life Literature Inc.'s Fundamental Baptist Information Service, an e-mail listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. Established in 1974, Way of Life Literature is a fundamental Baptist preaching and publishing ministry based in Bethel Baptist Church, London, Ontario, of which Wilbert Unger is the founding Pastor. Brother Cloud lives in South Asia where he has been a church planting missionary since 1979. OUR GOAL IN THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT OF OUR MINISTRY IS NOT DEVOTIONAL BUT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. The Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list is automated. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." If you have any trouble with this, please let us know. We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6) if they can. Some of the articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 32nd year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/publications/index.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. We do not solicit funds from those who do not agree with our preaching and who are not helped by these publications, but only from those who are. OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/makeanoffering.html>. PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dcloud%40wayoflife.org>

WAY OF LIFE LITERATURE SHARING POLICY: Much of our material is available for free, such as the hundreds of articles at the Way of Life web site and more than 60 free eBooks. Other items we sell to help fund our expensive literature, video, and foreign church planting ministry. Way of Life's content falls into two categories: sharable and non-sharable. Things that we encourage our readers to share include our audio sermons, video presentations, *O Timothy* magazine, the more than 60 free eBooks, and the hundreds of reports that we post at the web site. You are welcome to make copies of these at your own expense and share them with friends and family. You are also welcome to use excerpts from the articles. All we ask is that you give proper credit. What we do not want is for the free eBooks to be reposted at other web sites. Under the non-sharable category are items like the Fundamental Baptist Digital Library, the print editions of our books, PDF and other electronic edition of the books that we sell (other than the free ones), PowerPoints, etc. These items have taken years to produce at enormous expense in time and money, and we use the income from the sale of these to help fund the ministry. The Bible says, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Timothy 5:18). We trust that your Christian honesty will preserve the integrity of this policy.